

Esopus Environmental Board Minutes
September 20, 2023 Meeting

Present:

Mark Ellison, EB Chairman
Laura Petit, Climate Smart Chairperson
Ellie Gartenstein
Cynthia McVay
Christine Baker
Nina Nichols

Also Present:

Councilperson Evelyn Clarke (7:45 p.m.)

Excused:

Noel Russ
Chris Decicco

Meeting commenced at approximately 7:10 p.m.

Old Business:

Upon Motion of Laura Petit, seconded by Cynthia McVay and all in favor, the June 21, 2023 Minutes as amended were approved 6-2.

Membership: One vacancy exists. Secretary to check “chat” for contact information of individual that was on the July Zoom meeting.

UC EMC – August 2023 meeting was held in Rosendale. Chairman would circulate the July minutes when received.

Honeybee Jubilee – Laura Petit provided a recap of the event. Approximately 200 persons attended. Would like to involve more educational vendors at future events. Cynthia McVay had a box of jumpsuits that may be useful for some type of related purpose at event.

The Members were charged with a date to consider celebrating Earth Day in 2024. Christine Baker suggested hosting a “Last Frost Day” mid-May and may alleviate conflicts held throughout the vicinity celebrating Earth Day on the same date. Chairman asked that the date be put into place by mid-January 2024. Possibility of coordinating an electronic collection at the transfer station was suggest – Chairman would speak with Brian. Freer Park was discussed as another possible location with events acknowledging the river being incorporated, ie: releasing frozen seeds into the river.

Riecker Park Pollinator Garden – Nina Nichols acknowledged the service of the Buildings and Grounds crew. The garden had been relocated further up the hillside in the Park. A person visiting the Park had voiced concern regarding bee stings and Members felt that providing education regarding pollinators may be useful for the benefit of the public. Suggestion to incorporate bat houses was made and Cynthia McVay stated that she had some that could be used. Nina Nichols was coordinating with Buildings & Grounds for fencing materials and determine who would be responsible for maintenance (Buildings & Grounds or Environmental Board). Signage was being developed. Mark Ellison noted that there was an unofficial tree/shrub task force that could be consulted for future projects.

Budget - Status of remaining funds was discussed. Laura Petit requested if there were line items that could be spent down, she would like funds to put toward the Honeybee Jubilee for 2024 (more signs).

Other – Michael Knudsen was a new contact at Scenic Hudson. Mark Ellison had sent the result of the Carex Frankii surveys taken since 2011-2013. Christine Baker asked for information on the identification of the sedge.

New Business:

Tree Clearing Policy – Ellie Gartenstein was investigating tree policy for the City of Kingston and New Paltz. Cynthia McVay voiced her objections to tree clearing on properties without permitting/regulating. Screening should be native and create a habitat rather than simply serving to providing buffer. Mark Ellison stated that any policy developed if approved, should be provided to the Code Enforcement Officer to enforce and provided to the Planning Board to incorporate into project reviews. Chairman noted that education would be needed to accompany any policy. He would find template policy for private owners and solar installations and would provide prior to next meeting. The topic could be on the next Agenda.

Recycling Signage for Parks – Question was raised if recycling should continue or be placed in parks and signage could be updated. Cynthia McVay inquired about the feasibility of waste pickup at the fishing location on River Road. Garbage notoriously accumulated in that location and was blown around after time. Topic would be discussed with the Town Supervisor. Christine Baker offered to coordinate with Nina Nichols for pollinator garden signage.

Ulster County Natural Resource Inventory – The inventory had been completed and had been presented at the Ulster County Climate Smart Roundabout held in August at the Rosendale Community Center. Mark Ellison would send link that would be available for use by the public, planning boards and zoning boards.

ZOOM – Option discussed for hybrid meetings although only in-person attendees voting would be acknowledged. For the time being, meetings would be held in-person.

Climate Smart Task Force –

EV Charging Stations – Europa McGovern had met with the Town Supervisor. Location for station was preferred outside of the Ulster County Sheriff's substation.

PE9 – Emergency preparedness – The rack cards had been ordered for display. Cornell Cooperative had worked with Noel Russ, Mark Ellison, Laura Petit and Mike Rice to create a QR code link. The cards would be revealed at the Emergency Preparedness Expo. The website was not live yet.

Repair Café – Taking place Saturday September 30, 2023 at the Ascension Church from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Checking on availability of the Church for November and December.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Mance, Secretary

Esopus Environmental Board Minutes
September 20, 2023 Meeting

Dated: October 12, 2023
Approved: January 17, 2024